

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 04521 160743Z
ACTION NEA-10

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 4521

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BG
SUBJECT: DACCA ON THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF SHEIKH MUJIB'S
ASSASSINATION

1. PRESIDENT ZIA USED THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN'S ASSASSINATION (AUGUST 15) TO GIVE A SHORT BUT HIGHLY POLITICIZED SPEECH ON AUGUST 14 TO THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, URGING THE MEMBERS TO "UNITE, IDENTIFY THE ELEMENTS CARRYING OUT ANTI-NATIONAL AND ANTI-PEOPLE ACTIVITIES AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION AGAINST THEM." THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS HAD CHOSEN THE ANNIVERSARY TO PRESENT TO ZIA AN INSIGNIA EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH HIM "TO RISE AGAINST ANTI-PEOPLE NATIONAL ENEMIES OF 1971 AND POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD AND AGAINST THE INFILTRATION OF THEIR MASTERS."

2. IN A WELL-COORDINATED AND OBVIOUSLY GOVERNMENT-INSPIRED MOVE, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 DACCA 04521 160743Z

ASSOCIATION, MAHFUZUR RAHMAN, THE PREVIOUS DAY HAD ISSUED A PRESS STATEMENT DECLARING THAT "THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WOULD THWART THE CONSPIRACY OF THE ENEMIES OF THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT" AND "WEED OUT" LOCAL AGENTS OF FOREIGN POWERS BY OBSERVING AUGUST 15 AS A NATIONAL RESISTANCE DAY. THE STATEMENT ADDED THAT THE MUJIB GOVERNMENT "WAS BEING RUN IN THE INTERESTS OF FOREIGN

POWERS AND WAS TRAITOR AND AUTOCRATIC IN NATURE."

3. ZIA'S SPEECH AND THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS' STATEMENT HAVE OSTENSIBLY BEEN IN RESPONSE TO AN AWAMI LEAGUE CALL FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF AUGUST 15TH AS A DAY OF MOURNING. BOTH AS A RESULT OF AND AS A PRECAUTION AGAINST STUDENT TROUBLE, THE UNIVERSITY HAD BEEN CLOSED SINCE FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, AND LARGE NUMBERS OF BOTH TROOPS AND POLICE HAVE BEEN POSTED AROUND THE CAMPUS SINCE FRIDAY. AS OF MID-DAY AUGUST 15, HOWEVER, THE CITY AND THE UNIVERSITY REMAIN QUIET.

4. IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A WELL-ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN AGAINST BAKSALITES AND AWAMI LEAGUERS IN GENERAL, THE DACCA PRESS AUGUST 15 ALSO PRINTED SEPARATE STATEMENTS FROM A VARIETY OF POLITICAL LEADERS CALLING FOR THE PUNISHMENT OF BAKSALITES WHO HAD PLUNDERED THE COUNTRY UNTIL TWO YEARS AGO. THE CENTER AND LEFT POLITICIANS, INCLUDING ATATUR RAHMAN KHAN, DECLARED THAT A NEW POLITICAL CONSPIRACY WAS AFOOT AND URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO PUNISH COLLABORATORS STILL SERVING IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.

5. COMMENT: ZIA'S SPEECH, MORE POLITICALLY STRIDENT THAN USUAL, THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS PUBLICIZED SUPPORT OF ZIA'S REMARKS AND THE CALLS FROM A VARIETY OF POLITICAL LEADERS REPRESENT A BROAD SLASH AT THE BAKSALITES, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DACCA 04521 160743Z

WHO ARE INDISCRIMINATELY ASSOCIATED WITH ALL AWAMI LEAGUERS DESPITE ITS INTRA-PARTY DISPUTES WHICH HAVE TENDED TO ISOLATE AS BAKSALITES ONLY THE HARD-CORE SUPPORTERS OF MUJIB. THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN CONFIRMS THAT THE BDG IS CONCERNED ABOUT AWAMI LEAGUE INFLUENCE ON THE LOCAL LEVEL DESPITE THE POPULARITY OF GENERAL ZIA AND THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION. WHATEVER THE EXTENT OF THAT INFLUENCE, ZIA SEEMS ANXIOUS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE IS WELL IN COMMAND SHOULD ANYONE TRY TO UPSTAGE HIM IN GAINING POLITICAL CAPITAL BY HARKING BACK TO THE SHEIKH'S ASSASSINATION. BERGESEN

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